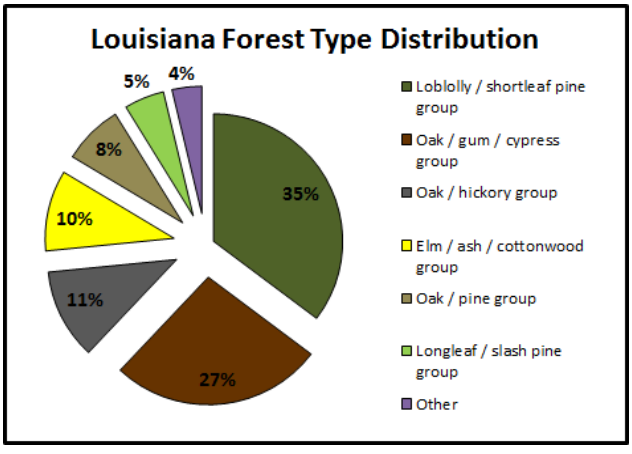
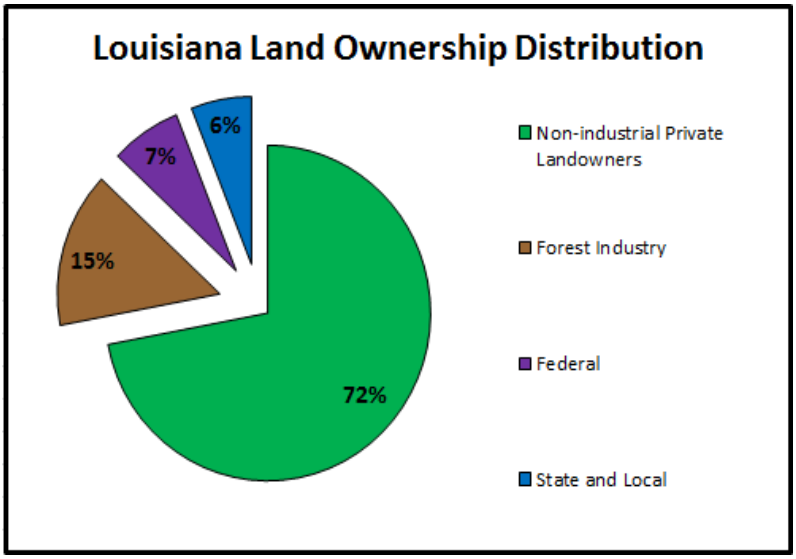
Louisiana

Forest Health Highlights 2020

The Resource

Louisiana's forests cover 15 million acres, nearly half of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land, some 10.8 million acres, is in non-industrial private ownership, while approximately 604,000 acres are in national forests. Louisiana's forests are prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat throughout the state. Major forest types in Louisiana include loblolly and shortleaf pine, oak-gum-cypress, oak-hickory, elm-ash-cottonwood, mixed oak-pine, and longleaf and slash pine. Other minor types account for approximately 4% of the forest.





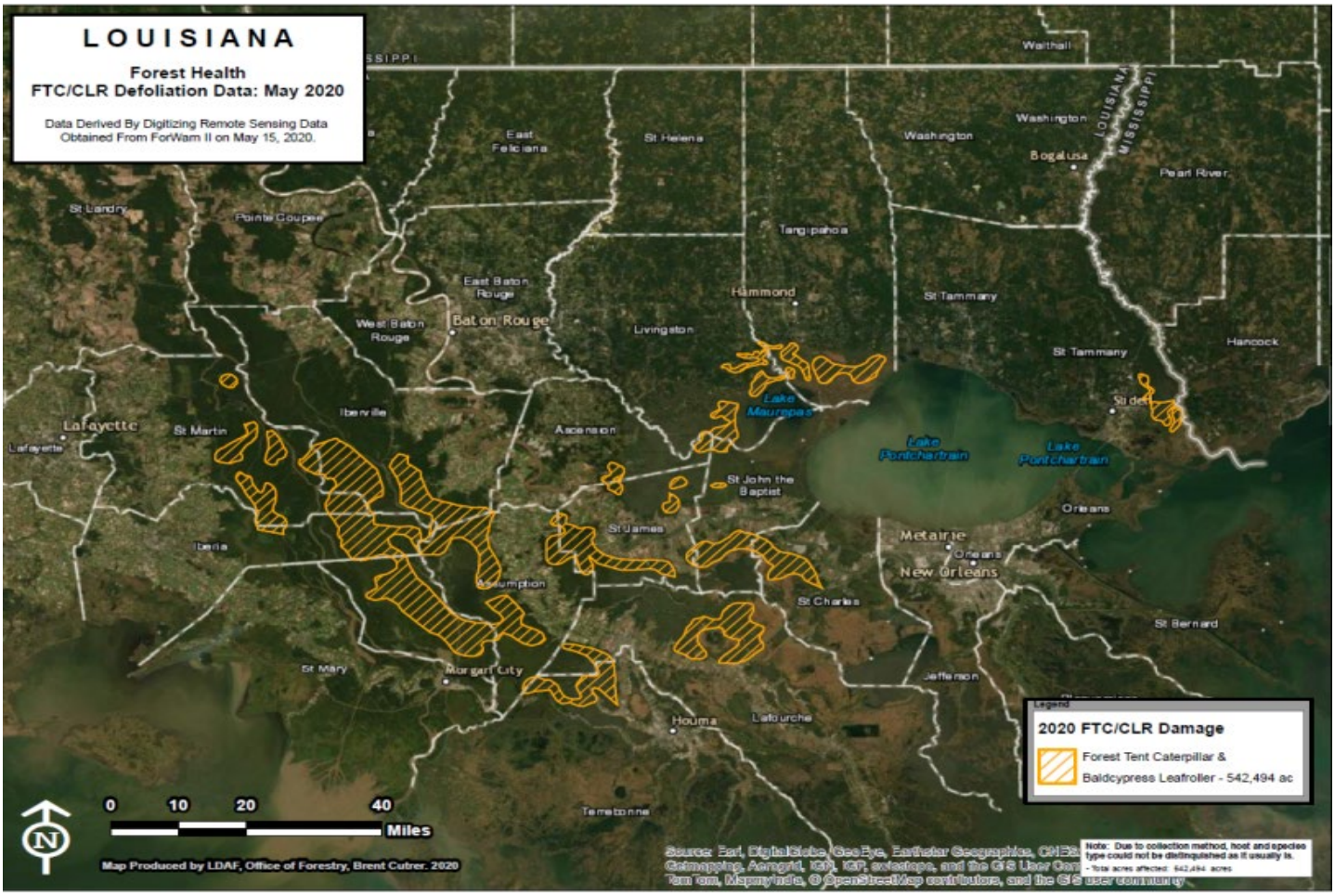
Forest Influences and Programs

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is Louisiana's most significant forest insect pest. However, SPB activity in the state has been insignificant since the late 1990's. In 2018, we recorded 23 SPB spots in the Feliciana's. Our annual spring SPB survey has caught SPB specimens since 2018. Our spring survey consisted of 35 traps spanning over 25 parishes.

This past year, we've flown 28 whole survey flights, consisting of 50 parishes, across our state. The Louisiana Office of Forestry continues to monitor and educate landowners on SPB.

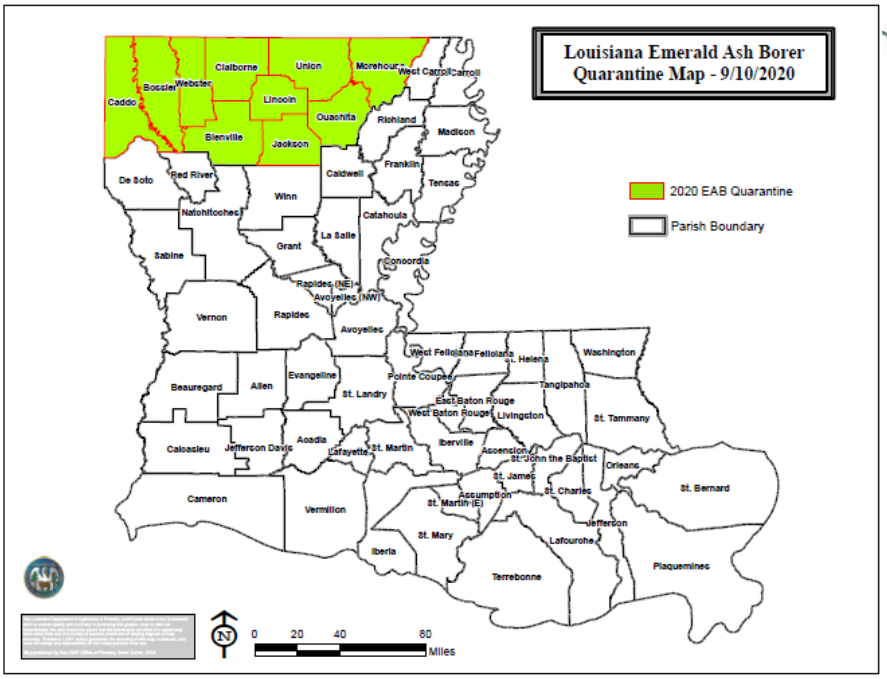
Pine engraver beetles (Ips spp.) and the black turpentine beetle remain at relatively normal levels. Because Ips infestations tend to be relatively small and scattered, they usually cannot be effectively controlled or salvaged, but their economic costs may exceed those caused by SPB. We've recorded 4 Ips infestations in 2020.

Forest tent caterpillar and the **Baldcypress leafroller** caused defoliation this spring on about 540,000 acres of tupelo gum wetlands and mixed baldcypress stands in South Louisiana. This year, due to Covid-19, a combination of previous maps, remote sensing data from Forwarn II, and a quick aerial observation was used to map the damaged area.

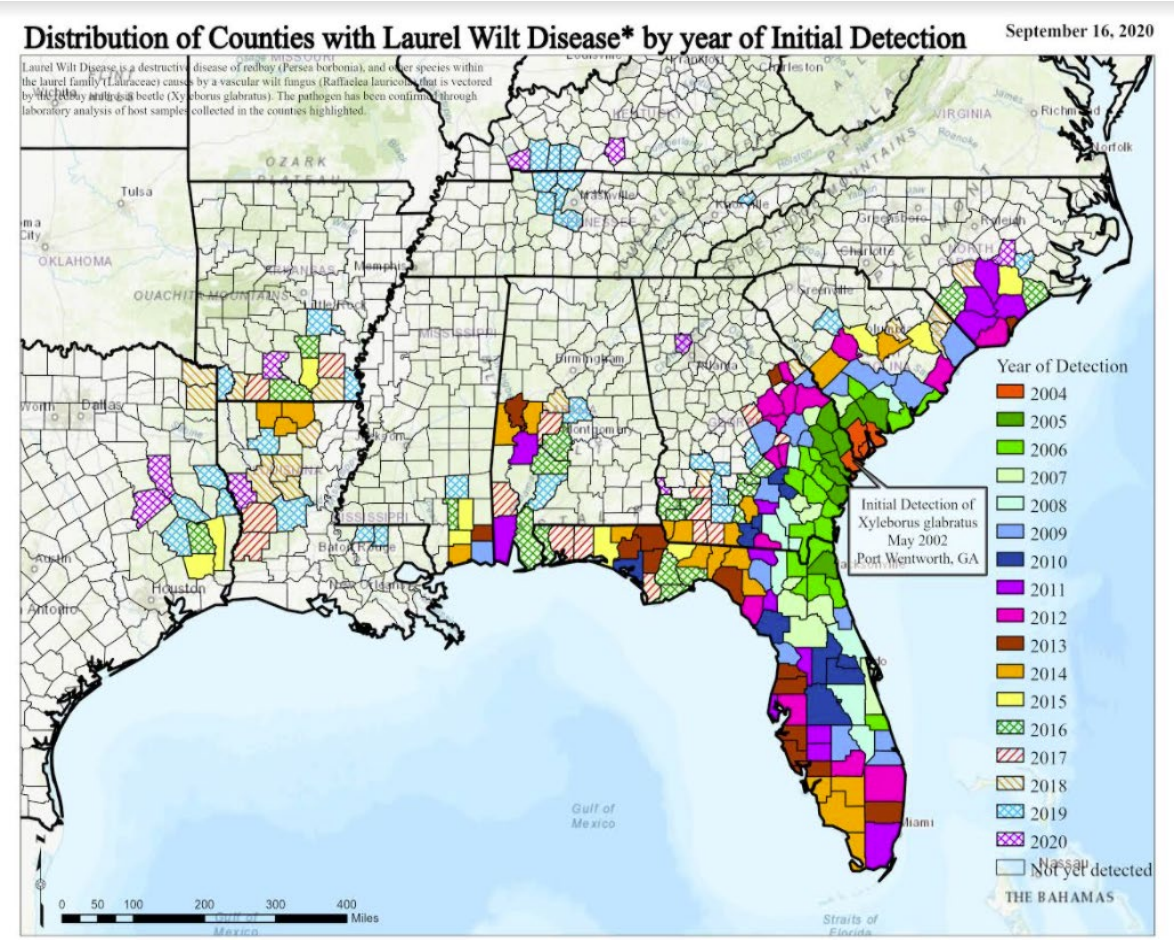


Gypsy Moth survey was conducted using 173 traps across the state and no gypsy moths were captured.

Emerald Ash borer was first confirmed in Webster Parish in February of 2015. It has since been confirmed in Bossier, Claiborne, Union, Lincoln, Bienville, Jackson, Morehouse, Ouachita, and Caddo Parishes. Our EAB survey didn't record any new infested parishes this past year. We have continued to inform landowners of this pest and have distributed information through press releases and handouts. We continue to coordinate with other agencies to monitor and implement our EAB response plan.

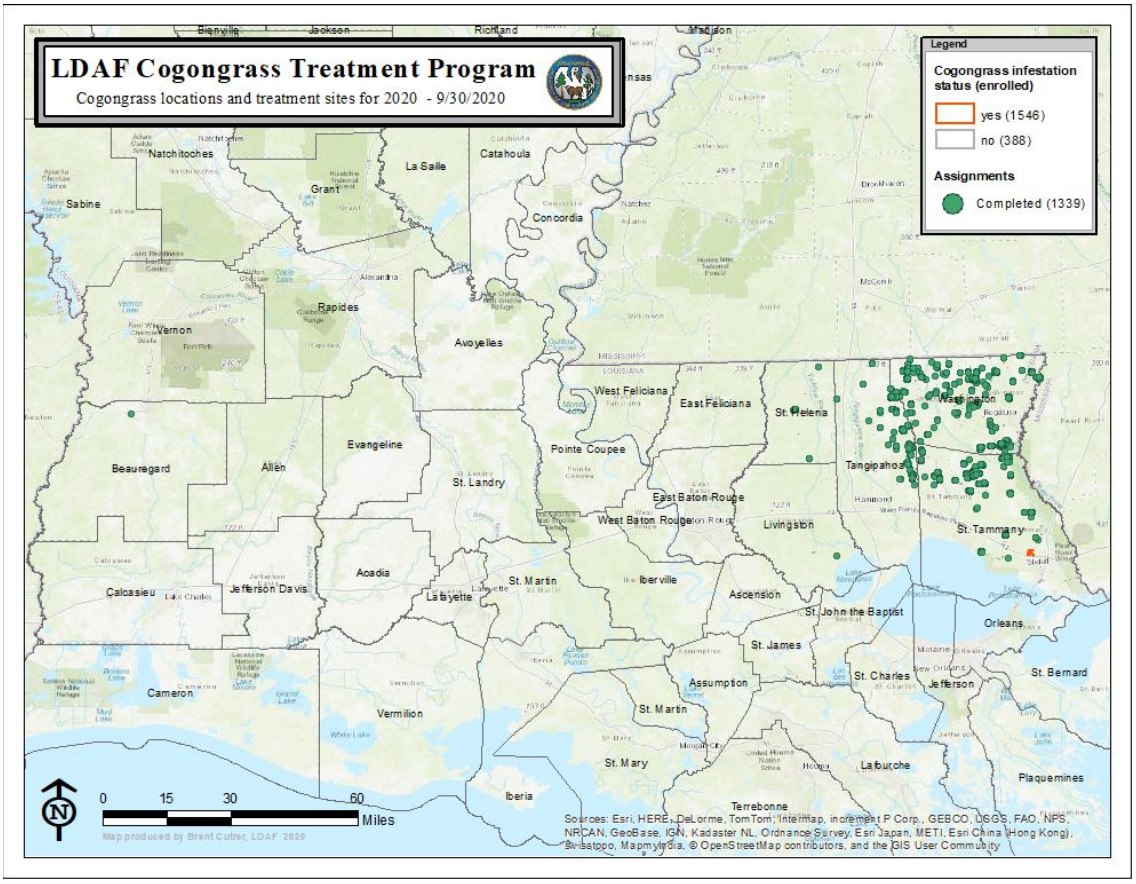


Laurel Wilt Disease and the Redbay Ambrosia Beetle made its introduction into Union Parish, Louisiana in September 2014. Sabine Parish was the only parish added in 2020. Our foresters continue to observe for declining sassafras and redbay trees caused by laurel wilt.


Distribution of Counties with Laurel Wilt Disease* by year of Initial Detection
September 16, 2020
Laurel Wilt Disease is a destructive disease of redbay (Persea borbonia), and other species within the laurel family (Lauraceae) caused by a vascular wilt fungus (Raffaelea lauricola) that is vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (Xyleborus glabratus). The pathogen has been confirmed through laboratory analysis of host samples collected in the counties highlighted.
Year of Detection
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
Not yet detected
Initial Detection of Xyleborus glabratus May 2002 Port Wentworth, GA
THE BAHAMAS
Gulf of Mexico
0 50 100 200 300 400 Miles

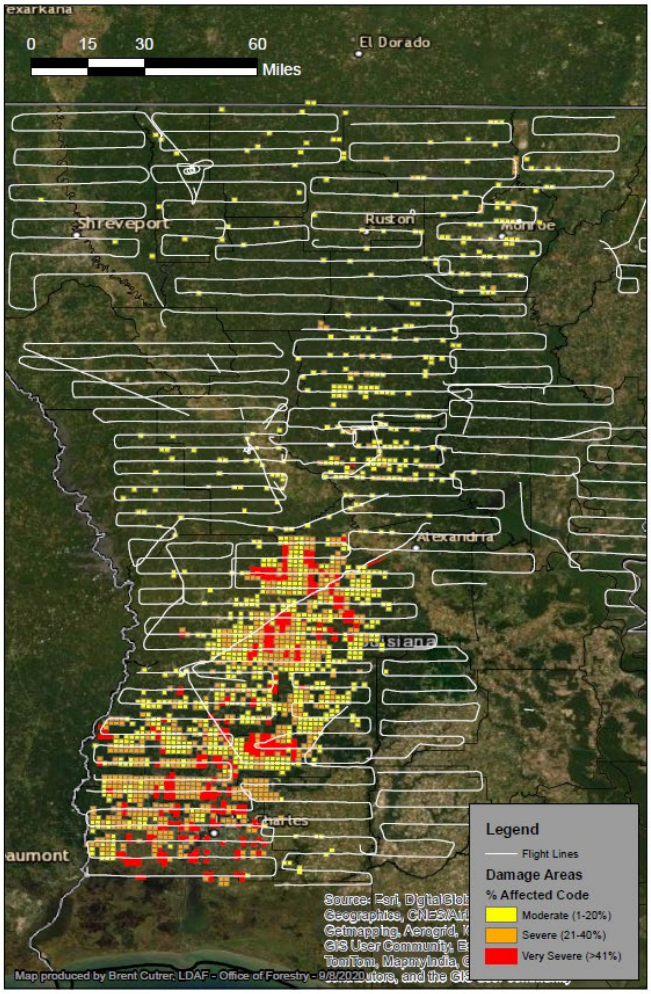
Redbay ambrosia beetle

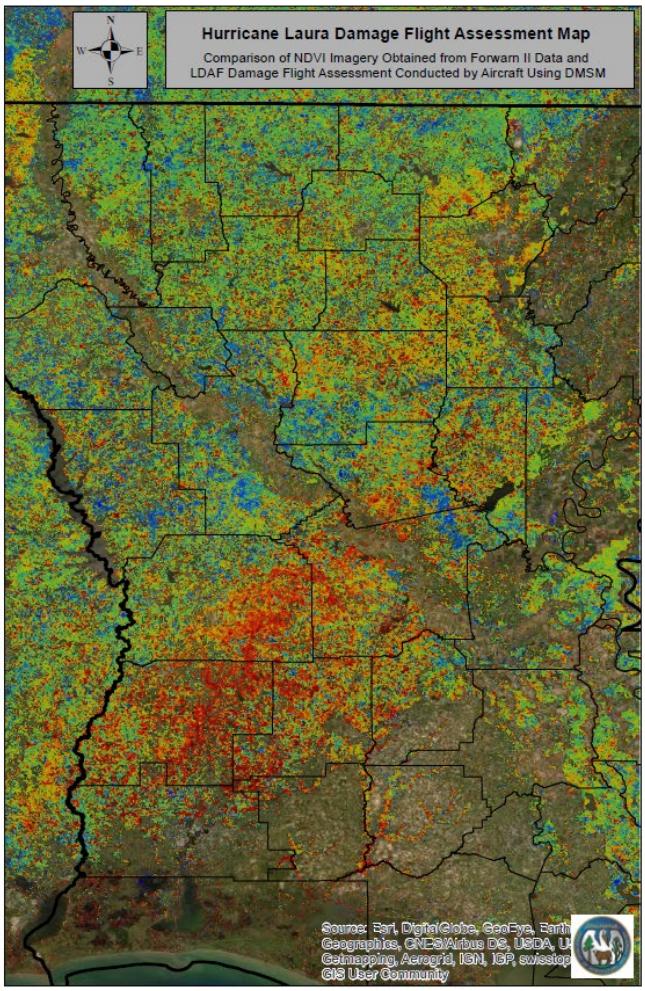
Cogongrass is a serious invasive species occurring primarily in southeast Louisiana. LDAF has implemented a new Cogongrass Treatment Program that is finishing up its third year. Currently, we've documented 1,934 infestations for 325 acres and have treated 1,339 infestations for 226 acres this past year. LDAF previously advertised our program in our department's market bulletin and participated in landowner meetings to help spread the word about cogongrass and our treatment program that we have implemented.



Hurricane Laura made landfall on August 27, as a category 4, in Cameron Parish, La. It devastated timberland from southwest Louisiana to the central part of the state and continued to cause damage to the northeastern part of the state. We used the grid collection method in the DMSM system to survey the damage immediately after the storm. USFS calculations showed a total damaged area of 600,848 acres. This was the first time this method has been used to evaluate a natural disaster of this magnitude. The process went fairly smooth and we were able to obtain statistics and produce maps quickly. The coordination between the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the USFS went extremely well. LSU Ag Center estimated a timber loss of over $1.1 billion in Louisiana alone.

Hurricane Delta made landfall on October 10, as a category 2, also in Cameron Parish, La. Its path was just east of Hurricane Laura's and had much less of an impact on our timberlands.




Hurricane Laura Damage Flight Assessment Map
Comparison of NDVI Imagery Obtained from Forwarn II Data and
LDAF Damage Flight Assessment Conducted by Aircraft Using DMSM

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